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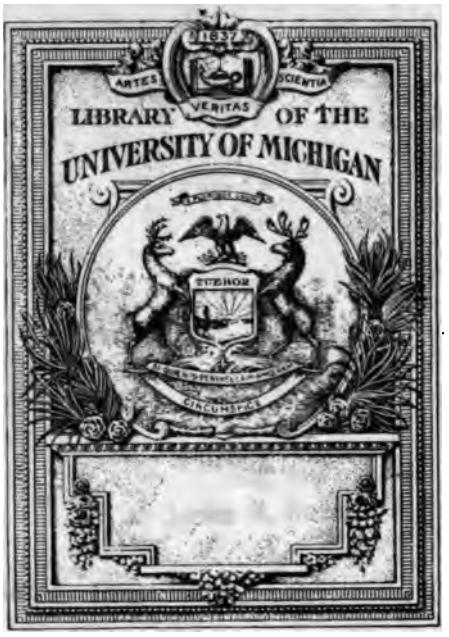
Andrew G. Curtin.



THE GIFT OF
J. Herbert Russell

ANDREW G CURTIN.

THE LIFE AND SERVICES

OF

ANDREW G. CURTIN.

AN ADDRESS

BY

A. K. McCLURE,

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AT HARRISBURG, PA.,

JANUARY 20, 1895.

CLARENCE M. BUSCH,

STATE PRINTER OF PENNSYLVANIA,

1895.

RESOLUTION.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
February 4, 1895.

Resolved (if the Senate concur), That ten thousand copies of the *McClure* memorial exercises of *Ex-Governor Curtin* be printed and bound in cloth, five thousand for the use of the *House of Representatives*, and three thousand for the use of the *Senate*, and two thousand for the use of the *Executive* and other *Departments*.

A. D. FETTEROLF,
Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives.

E. W. SMILEY,
Chief Clerk of the Senate.

Approved the eleventh day of February, Anno Domini one thousand eight hundred and ninety-five.

DANIEL H. HASTINGS.

I hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of the resolution concurred in by the *Senate February 6, 1895*, and approved by the *Governor February 11, 1895*.

A. D. FETTEROLF,
Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives.

438-46

THE LIFE AND SERVICES

OF

ANDREW G. CURTIN.

Hon. HENRY F. WALTON, *Speaker*, said:

We are here to-night to listen to an address on the life and public services of Andrew G. Curtin, one of Pennsylvania's greatest sons. I have been selected to call this meeting to order and I do so with great pleasure. I have the honor to introduce to you as your permanent chairman a gentleman who was a warm personal friend of Governor Curtin and is a friend and companion of the distinguished gentleman who is to address you, Col. Alexander K. McClure.

He is a gentleman who has been in public life for over half a century and to-day is the oldest living member of the Legislature of Pennsylvania.

I present to you the Honorable George V. Lawrence, of Washington county.

Mr. LAWRENCE said:

"Ladies and Gentlemen: As chairman of the joint committee of the Senate and House of Representatives, which has charge of the proceedings preliminary to this meeting, I am ordered to preside, and I esteem it a very great honor. This is a rare assembly convened for a most laudable purpose which cannot but meet the ap-

proval of every intelligent and patriotic citizen of the State.

"It was justly anticipated by the people that their representatives here should take some intelligent and proper action in reference to the public life and services of the late ex-Governor Andrew G. Curtin. The common gratitude of all men approved this, for his name is revered in every household in the land, and his devotion to the soldiers of his native State during the war, and his patriotic action and defense of the Union is to them a living, blooming Amaranth on their pathway through life.

"In looking among those who were competent to express to us and to the people a proper estimate of his public services and to put in such form of language as would tend to perpetuate his fame and carry it to the generations who shall follow us, our minds naturally turned to that man who above all others was his most intimate friend and associate during the eventful period of his life, one who understood the motives of his public action, and stood nearer to him than any one outside his own household. I need not say I allude to Colonel A. K. McClure, whom I now present to this large and intelligent assembly of gentlemen and ladies."

COLONEL MCCLURE said:

Mr. President, Senators, Representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Heroic epochs are essential to the development and preservation of the best civilization in any people. Montesquieu, a distinguished writer and historian of the last century, said: "Happy the people whose annals are blank in history's book." He was in error. The people whose annals are unnoted in history achieve nothing for the world or for themselves. No advancement in litera-

ture, in art, in statesmanship, in philosophy, in heroism, or in any other attribute that ennobles mankind, has ever been made by a nation whose records lack heroic epochs.

History is full of pointed examples teaching that the nation that has outlived heroism has ever dated its decline and fall. After a thousand years of Roman greatness the mistress of the world struggled in the agonies of death for two centuries, and regardless of its matchless record of distinction in every quality of human achievement, during the two hundred years of its decay it did not produce a single great hero, statesman, philosopher, poet, sculptor, or painter. When heroism perished in Rome, Rome perished; and the barbarian from the Northern forests swarmed upon her hills, vanquished her enfeebled legions, reveled in the halls of the Caesars, razed her monuments of mastery to the earth, and the God of nations seemed to have given over the once ruler of empire to "the lines of confusion and the stones of emptiness."

It is true that our more advanced and enlightened civilization is unlike the civilization of the great nations which ruled the world in olden times. They ruled by conquest and grew rich by spoilation. With such people heroism was the vital inspiration of their greatness; but when we had reached the noon day of the nineteenth century with peace and its victories welcomed as the jewels of progress, herioc epochs of different times became blended with our more beneficent civilization.

The people of this land exhibited more heroism in laying the foundations of our peaceful civilization than ever did the armies of Alexander, of Caesar, or of Hannibal. They founded their settlements in the wilderness, erected their rude homes and churches and relied

upon their Bible and their rifle for the protection of themselves and their household goods. For nearly a century after the pale-faced Quaker, Puritan and Cavalier made their homes in the New World we have one unbroken record of heroism that was never surpassed by any people. Our forefathers were not only heroic in battle for their liberties and in defense of their homes against the savage, but they were born and schooled to heroism, from the mother's lap to the alter, in maintaining their faith, in vindicating their government and in advancing every attribute of civilization. Of all the peoples of the earth the Americans to-day have the most heroic ancestry, and they have proved, even after generations of peaceful pursuits, that when their faith, their homes or their free institutions are threatened, heroic epochs spring up spontaneously from the sturdy sons of the Republic.

It was by the development of one of the most heroic epochs of human history that the noblest government of the earth, now enjoyed by 70,000,000 of people, was preserved from overthrow by civil war. It was the most heroic conflict of any period of the world's history, and it was so because the conflict was fraternal. Men born to the same great inheritance, worshipping the same proud traditions, developing the same great attributes of manhood, trained to their opposing convictions by the same type of statesmen, pulpits and schools could not but be equally heroic in defense of their convictions. It was because the North and South were peopled by Americans of the same heroic mould that civil war could not be averted when great issues, that had been discussed for three-quarters of a century, demanded final solution and defied the skill of statesmen.

Had either section been less heroic, war might have been averted; the sad story of our struggle might have been untold; but the period had arrived when manhood confronted compromise, and how heroic were both the blue and the gray in the bloody drama, is told in the deeply crimsoned annals of the conflict. It was the great heroic epoch of the century, and it was the second grand illustration of the heroism of the American people in man's greatest battle for man.

Heroic Epochs Create Heroes.

Such opportunities come to all nations, and when they are equal to the heroic epoch that is necessary to advance their civilization, the occasion always creates great leaders. Abraham Lincoln might have served as an average President and retired without exceptional fame in the list of our chief magistrates, had not civil war called out the marvellous qualities he possessed as patriot and statesman. It was the heroic epoch of 1860 that called him to leadership, that made his name immortal, and that will make his memory worshipped in every clime where liberty has votaries. Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, Meade, Thomas, Hancock and many others who attained fame during the rebellion, would have lived and died almost unknown but for the heroic epoch that called them to their country's service. They commanded great armies; and after four years of bloody war made Appomattox historic, for it was there determined that "government of the people, by the people and for the people should not perish from the earth."

During long weary months and years, involving countless cost and fearful sacrifice, with bereavement shadowing almost every home, the conflict continued, and the American student of to-day who reads the history of

that struggle sees only the records of its victories and defeats, but knows little of the heroic efforts which were necessary in the State to maintain great armies and to uphold the cause of the Union. The War Governors of the North were the source of the military power of the nation, and they stand out to-day single over all the thousands of brave men, outside of the army, in the lustre of their achievement in behalf of the assailed Republic.

It was this heroic epoch that called Andrew G. Curtin to what proved to be the most responsible civil trust held by any man, with the single exception of Abraham Lincoln. His State was greatest in peril of all the Northern Commonwealths. It was second to but one in physical strength; it was second to none in resources to maintain free government and in moral power to shape the issues of the conflict. Like Abraham Lincoln, he was not made the leader to meet civil war, for it was not then expected; but the men who made both these leaders in the great battle of 1860 builded wiser than they knew, and each fulfilled his great destiny by achievements unexampled in the records of their respective positions.

Curtin and Free Education.

Forty-one years ago I sat in this Hall with Curtin as a member of the convention whose action called him into public life. He had been named for the position of Governor himself, but he was young and heartily yielded to the Whig sentiment that pointed to the late Governor James Pollock as the man to lead the party in the contest. When the campaign was about to be opened Pollock summoned Curtin to lead his forces in the severe battle in which they were about to enter and he con-

ducted it with masterly skill and energy, resulting in the election of Pollock by an overwhelming majority. When the victory was won but one name was seriously thought of to take the chief position in the cabinet of the new Governor, and Curtin was called as Secretary of the Commonwealth with the universal approval of his party.

While few to-day turn to his record as Secretary of the Commonwealth to illustrate the distinguished services he has given to this State, the thoughtful student of our history will learn that it was under his administration as Secretary of the Commonwealth, that the foundations were laid for our present free school system that is now the most liberal and beneficent in the world. When he entered Pollock's Cabinet our school system was not dignified as a department of the State. Its direction was one of the secondary duties of the Secretary of the Commonwealth, and he was the first incumbent of that office who systematically organized the free schools on the broadest basis and with the efficient aid of his Deputy Secretary, Henry C. Hickok, opened the way for the universal education of the children of the State. Later as Governor he was enabled to build the grand structure upon the foundations he had laid. Next to Thaddeus Stevens, the author of the free school law, and to George Wolf, the heroic German Governor who approved the measure, our grand system of free education of to-day is more indebted to Andrew G. Curtin than to any other of our public men.

The Heroic Party of 1860.

The year 1860 gave birth to the heroic epoch of our century. Few who were enlisted in the cause of redeeming the Republic to a nationalized freedom had

any conception of the gravity of the issue, or the violent throes through which the cause must triumph. A new party had entered the field of national politics. It was unlike all parties that had confronted the dominant political power of the nation since the triumph of Jefferson in 1800. There were various party organizations during the sixy years in which Jeffersonian Democracy maintained ascendancy, but they never established a national policy, never reversed the rule of the party over which they occasionally triumphed, and all must go into history simply as the Opposition, but the national contest of 1856 developed, in crude form but mighty proportions, the new political faith that was to reach its culminating point in 1860.

It was not a mere opposition; it was a party of conviction, of aggression, or resolute purpose, and defeat could not make it falter nor the temptation of power shatter its ranks. It was organized for one great purpose—to halt the aggressive encroachments of slavery. Its platform was formed within the lines of the national constitution, and, while revolutionary in its aim, obedience to law was one of the cardinal features of its faith. At no time in the history of political action did any party ever display more disinterested devotion to its conviction or more complete regard to the fitness of its chosen leaders. The issue rose high above all considerations of the spoilsmen, and in sober, unflinching earnestness it marshalled its hosts for the mighty conflict that revolutionized the policy of the government that had nationalized bondage, and it thus dedicated a continent to freedom.

Curtin's Great Battle and Victory.

On the 23d and 24th of February, 1860, I again sat in this Hall and was an humble participant in one of the

most important political State Conventions ever held in our history. The more heroic element of the new party that was about to make its great struggle for State and national supremacy, had but one candidate in that convention for Governor, and that man was Andrew G. Curtin. Had there been no issue but that of choosing a leader for the State contest, he would have been chosen without serious opposition; but the conflicts of ambition, which are felt in all parties, and which are often to be commended as vastly more beneficial than hurtful in obtaining good political results, were disturbing in that body. It was the ablest convention of the kind I have ever seen in Pennsylvania, and from the beginning through the two days of its session, it was a battle of giants; but on the second ballot Curtin was made the candidate by a decided majority, although seven other names, some of great prominence, were presented and earnestly pressed against him.

Curtin was chosen because of the general belief in his pre-eminent fitness for the high trust to be awarded. He was regarded as not only the most available as a campaigner, but as the best equipped for the successful discharge of his public duties, however grave they might become. When summoned to the convention to respond to its command to take the flag of his party and lead it in the conflict, I can recall him distinctly, as if it were but yesterday, as he appeared in this forum to declare that he would bear the banner of his faith from Lake Erie to the Delaware and return it in triumph if human efforts made it possible, but never with dishonor.

No man ever inspired his followers with greater confidence and enthusiasm than did Curtin when he stood here and accepted the leadership in the pivotal battle of the national revolution, for upon his election or de-

feat in October depended the election or defeat of Lincoln in November. He was a perfect Apollo in form and feature as he stood before his wildly enthusiastic supporters, and his brilliant oratory, ever varying from sober logic to the keenest invective or resistless humor, told how masterful were his qualities for leadership in the great struggle.

The most that the friends of Curtin could say when they presented him as a candidate for Governor was that the battle was a hopeful one. With great reluctance I obeyed his command to take the chairmanship of the State committee and the direction of the contest. There was then but one organized and disciplined political party in existence, and that was the Democracy. There were the old Whigs, Americans, Republicans and Independents, but there was no cohesion, no organization and no hope of success save by crystallizing all these varied and more or less incongruous elements into a great party. It was a task of no common magnitude, and it would have been beyond the power of the most sagacious political management but for the trust and enthusiasm inspired by Curtin in his canvass.

He more than fulfilled his promise to bear the banner of his cause into every section of the State. For three months he spoke almost daily, at times twice or thrice a day, and often when delivering an address he did not know until he closed where he was to fill his next appointment. Railroads did not then reach every county of the State as they do now, but he had no care as to his movements, for when his address was finished a committee was always waiting to take him in charge. So exacting were his labors that all the hundreds of letters sent to him, save those which came from his own home, were forwarded unopened to the State committee for answer.

The Democrats nominated against him Henry D. Foster, one of the ablest and most popular leaders of that party, and Pennsylvania has never before or since witnessed a State political contest that was so ably conducted by the opposing leaders, or that enlisted such universal interest amongst the people. The result is one of the memorable landmarks of the political history of the nation. Curtin was chosen Governor by over 32,000 majority, and his election practically declared Abraham Lincoln the next President of the United States.

The Appalling Issue of Civil War.

Before Curtin was inaugurated as Governor of the State, in January, 1861, evidence of the settled purpose of the South to attempt the violent disruption of the States was given in many sections. States had formally seceded from the Union; forts, arsenals, arms and custom houses belonging to the government had been seized by the authority of the seceding States, and civil war seemed inevitable unless the border States could be held to their allegiance. Never before in the history of our statesmanship did such momentous problems call for solution, and Pennsylvania being the most important of all the Northern States, in view of her Southern border and the moral and physical power of the Commonwealth, was looked to from every section of the country, both North and South, with intensest anxiety. To have faltered in the faith of the people who had called the new party to power, would have made rebellion only the more defiant; to have answered madness in passion would have weakened every friend of the Union in the South and probably decided the destiny of many against the maintenance of the Republic.

President-elect Lincoln could not be inaugurated for

nearly three months, and no declaration could come from the National Government to guide the States in declaring their relations to each other and to the Republic There was no precedent in all our history to dictate the utterances of the man who was to speak not only for the most important Northern Commonwealth, but whose deliverance would be accepted as defining the attitude of the entire loyal North on the issue of war or peace. The men of to-day who believe that they have to grapple with great problems of statesmanship know nothing of the fearful responsibilities which had to be assumed in defining the position of Pennsylvania at the threshold of civil strife.

Governor Curtin came to this capital not to receive the ovations of welcome to a conqueror, although his inauguration was a most imposing ceremony; but he came profoundly impressed with the common peril to his State and country, and gave his efforts solely to wield the power of his great State for the preservation of peace, if peace could be maintained with honor, and to prepare for war if rebellion would accept no other arbitrament. His inaugural address, carefully prepared by himself in his mountain home, was an easy task on all the ordinary political issues, but he summoned the most intelligent and considerate counsels and gave almost ceaseless labors for several days and nights, to the declaration of the position of Pennsylvania on the then threatened rebellion of the South. How wisely he performed that duty is told in the fact that throughout four years of civil war, every attitude he assumed in that address was maintained and it now stands fully vindicated alike in statesmanship and prophecy.

I need not detail the arduous and responsible duties imposed upon Governor Curtin at the outset of the war.

They are well understood by this intelligent audience. The annals of our history tell how the State credit was maintained, how every quota of troops called for was promptly filled, how the soldiers were cared for, how the sick were ministered to, and the dying brought home for sepulchre, and all under the inspiration of Governor Curtin's liberal and patriotic policy.

Curtin's Great Struggle of 1863.

When his first term was about to close he gave the highest evidence of his unselfish devotion to the great conflict in which the life of the nation trembled. The ceaseless exactions of his official duties had left him broken in health, but he never ceased in the performance of his great work. I was present when to several trusted friends he declared it the duty of his party to select General William B. Franklin, a gallant Pennsylvania soldier and a Democrat, as a candidate of the loyal people of every political faith to succeed him in the Gubernatorial chair.

He did this when he knew that his renomination would be nearly or quite unanimous if he were willing to accept it, but he believed that individual ambition should ever yield to the public welfare, and he sought thus to unify all political parties in our State in support of the war, and weaken the hopes of the insurgents by the great State of Pennsylvania having effaced party lines to sustain the Union of our fathers. In this recommendation to unite the whole loyal people of the State on General Franklin for Governor the friends of Curtin heartily acquiesced, and I simply vindicate the truth of history when I say that had General Franklin been nominated on a war platform by his own party, that nominated its candidate in this forum on the 17th of

June, 1863, he would have been enthusiastically accepted by the Republican organization and elected by practically a unanimous vote. There were political leaders of that day in both parties, and they dominated the party opposed to Governor Curtin, who did not believe that the interests of an imperilled country were paramount, and they suffered defeat as they deserved.

The Republican convention to nominate Governor Curtin's successor met in Pittsburgh on the 5th of August, nearly two months after the action of his political opponents. He felt that in justice to himself and to his family he should not be a candidate for re-election, and under any circumstances not involving the existence of free government, his declination would have been peremptory. He felt, as did many of his closest friends, that the care and labors of another campaign would be a sacrifice of his life to public duty.

If he had simply desired political honors they were freely proffered to him. On the 13th of April of that year, I bore to him from President Lincoln an autograph letter voluntarily tendering him a first class foreign Mission at the expiration of his Gubernatorial term, if he were willing to accept it. That would have been an inviting compliment for one who sought only political advancement, and it promised rest for the weary and broken Governor; but when it was announced that he had been tendered a Mission, and that he would probably withdraw from the Gubernatorial contest, the response came from half a dozen of the leading counties of the State within a week, unanimously instructing for his renomination, and demanding that he should be made the candidate.

Curtin's apparent retirement as a candidate in 1863, naturally brought into the field men of high position

and attainments who sought the honors he had worn so worthily, but before the meeting of the convetnion the patriotic sentiment of the State was expressed with such emphasis in his favor that he was compelled to to bow to it and accept a contest that seemed more than doubtful in its issue, and continued responsibilities to which he seemed physically unequal. A single ballot determined the choice of the convention, and he was chosen as a candidate to succeed himself by an overwhelming majority.

The Soldiers Gave Curtin Victory.

While the battle of 1860 presented many elements of doubt because of the want of unity and organization of those who were partially or wholly in accord with the party that Curtin represented, the struggle for his re-election presented even graver elements of doubt. It was one of the most memorable political conflicts in the records of the State. More than 75,000 sons of Pennsylvania were in the army and without the right of suffrage. They could not be furloughed to participate in the election, and it was not until a year later that our amended fundamental law gave them the right of holding elections in the field. That four-fifths of these soldiers would have voted for Curtin's re-election could they have reached the polls was not doubted, and with them practically denied suffrage, and with partisan feeling greatly intensified and party lines drawn with the utmost severity of political discipline, his defeat seemed inevitable at the outset.

It was not merely a contest for the election of a Governor; it was the one political battle of Pennsylvania that was the crucial test of the purpose of her people to sustain the administration of Lincoln and the prosecu-

tion of the causeless war that shadowed the land until the Union should be fully restored. It was the most sober, the most earnest and the most aggressive political campaign that I can recall in fifty years' observation of our political contests. In every section of the State the people gathered to hear the orators on the hustings, but instead of the boisterous cheers which usually mark such demonstrations, men listened with bated breath as the issues of war were discussed.

The tall plume of our great leader was seen here and there as the battle progressed, but the bright, genial face was pinched with care, and the brilliant, inspiring oratory he infused into the contest of three years before gave place to the solemn utterances of one whose life seemed to be trembling in the balance as he bowed to the command of patriotism. He was saved from defeat by loyal men breaking party lines, and by the constant appeals from the army which came into almost every home of the Commonwealth, to re-elect Andrew G. Curtin, the Soldier's Friend. It was the mute eloquence of the brave warriors of the Union that came from their camp fires and their hospitals that reached the hearts of fathers and brothers and sons at home; gentle as the dews which jewel the flowers in the morning and as fragrant in every home where there was sorrow for loved ones fallen, or anxiety for those who survived the tempest of battle. There was but a single issue in that contest and the victory was for positive loyalty, as Curtin was re-elected by over 15,000 majority.

Curtin emerged from that desperate but glorious contest utterly broken in health and suffering from serious nervous and mental prostration; and soon after his re-inauguration he was compelled to leave the Legislature in session and journey to sunnier lands to restore his

shattered system. I cannot forget the day when many devoted friends who had been by his side in sunshine and storm, bade him farewell as he sailed from Philadelphia in search of health. None dared to cherish with any confidence the hope that he could return alive, but his vigorous constitution enabled him to rally with quiet and rest, and although he never recovered his full vigor, he was enabled to perform his official duties without interruption until the close of his term, and to enjoy life until he was bowed beneath the frosts of nearly four score years.

Two years after he retired from the Gubernatorial office I was assigned the grateful task of presenting to the Republican National Convention of 1868 his name as a candidate for Vice President and to cast the united vote of Pennsylvania in his favor. Pennsylvania was not then a doubtful State, while Indiana was regarded as debatable between the great parties, and it was this consideration that largely if not wholly dominated the action of the convention that chose Schuyler Colfax over the War Governor of Pennsylvania.

One of the earliest appointments made by President Grant after his inauguration was the voluntary nomination of Curtin for the Russian Mission. It was entirely unsought, but coming as a generous tribute from the head of the national government he accepted it, and was more cordially welcomed at the court of the Czar than were any of his predecessors, as is testified by the beautiful portrait of the Russian Emperor that adorns the now desolate home of Curtin as the gift of the Czar himself.

Immediately after his resignation and return from Russia, Curtin was chosen as a delegate-at-large to the convention to revise our State Constitution, and he was

not only the author of many of the most beneficent reforms introduced into that instrument, but he was one of the most useful of the members of the convention in hindering many of the more dangerous features sought to be engrafted upon it. His ripe experience in the government of Pennsylvania, and his intimate familiarity with all the vast and varied interests of our people, equipped him to render most conspicuous service in shaping the new organic law.

A few years thereafter he was called to the popular branch of Congress by the people of his district, and twice re-elected. He had then outlived the conflicts and resentments of his many desperate political battles, and not only as a Representative but in every social circle of Washington, every face smiled at his coming. When he retired from Congress his public life closed; his work was finished.

In the Conflicts of Ambition.

To say that Curtin was ambitious is only to state what must be told of every man who has ever been noted in achievement. He was at times involved in the bitterest conflicts of ambition with men who were struggling for the political favors within the gift of his successful party. I twice witnessed in these Legislative halls contests of intensest bitterness between him and others who were battling for the highest honors of the State. The first was as early as 1855; the last in 1867, and both left political sores which never healed until the conflicts of ambition were ended and time had mellowed the gladiators into gentleness.

I speak of these simply as part of the history of the man, not to revive bitter memories. Such contests are but the natural outgrowth or our free institutions, and

the ambition that calls gifted men to seek the honors of free government is in every way commendable. That few succeed and many fail is only the inevitable, and that merit is often outstripped in the race is the history of every political age; but it is none the less the truth that greatness can ever assert itself in this land of freedom, and that the highest tributes paid to it are in the appreciation of those who are the sovereign power of the government. He and those who struggled with him have passed away, and there are none but the kindest memories for all.

He Understood the War.

One of the first acts of Governor Curtin after he was inaugurated in January, 1861, was to organize a complete system of investigation into the actual condition of the South. The strictest secrecy was observed, and I doubt whether any officer of the government at Washington had the same accurate and practical information as to the real purposes of the seceding States. His agents were in every State in the South, some as telegraph operators, others as commercial men and yet others as accidental sojourners, and the information that came to him from these sources thoroughly convinced him that the South was terribly in earnest; that her people were substantially united, and that civil war was inevitable. This information was known to a very narrow circle of those around him, and while he knew how fearful the peril was, the general conviction of members of the Legislature and of the many visitors who came here to discuss the issue, was that those who were moving for war in the South were simply bombasts and would never meet the North in deadly conflict.

A pointed illustration of this sentiment I recall, for

its impress can never be effaced. On the night after the surrender of Sumter a caucus of the majority party of the Senate and House was held in this Hall, and I attended as a member of the Senate. Civil war was upon us, and the most fearful problem of our history was presented for solution. How should it be met? Speech after speech was made in that caucus denouncing the Southern agitators as cowards, and one going so far as to declare that the women of the North could sweep them from the Potomac with their brooms. Advised of Curtin's complete and accurate information as to the attitude of the South, I appealed to the caucus of the party that was charged with the responsible action of the State, to realize the fact that we were upon the threshold of war, and that the South being of our own blood and lineage, if plunged into a struggle with the North would make one of the bloodiest wars of history. For this utterance I was hissed in every part of the hall. Alas, how fearfully was that prophesy fulfilled.

It was this knowledge of Curtin of the inner movements of the Southern people that made him ever prepared for every emergency that arose early in the war. The first bill to arm the State was passed in this Capitol in one evening, and its discussion was interrupted in both Senate and House by the clerks reading the appalling dispatches from Charleston, telling of the hot shot hurled against the helpless and starving garrison of Major Anderson.

Heroic Action Creating the Pennsylvania Reserves.

The next fearful lesson in the war was when the disloyal eruption in Baltimore severed the telegraphs and railways between Washington and the North, and stopped all communication for several days. General

Patterson was here as commander of the department comprising Pennsylvania, Maryland and Delaware, and Colonel Fitz John Porter was here representing General Scott, the commander-in-chief. With them were a number of gentlemen whose services were volunteered to aid the Executive and the government to the fullest extent of their ability, and when I recall the conferences held in the executive chamber during those times, I recall the memories of the darkest of all the dark days of the history of our State.

Those around Curtin could advise, but he alone could act. It was theirs to counsel, it was his to assume the responsibility, and it was by his final request to General Patterson, that could be accepted only as a command, that the requisition was made upon him by the commander of the department for 25,000 additional troops to serve for three years or during the war. No advices could be had from Washington. For aught we knew the victorious army of Beauregard had already besieged or captured the capital of the Republic.

The Governor issued his call for volunteers, and it was telegraphed to every part of the State. Long before the mails could carry it to the people it was known in every centre of population and the patriotic sons of the State were volunteering by thousands. It was the most spontaneous overflow of patriotic purpose that I have ever witnessed, or indeed have ever read of. As soon as communication could be had with Washington the call for troops and the action of the Governor were officially transmitted, and the first answer that came revoked the order for the troops and refused to accept them.

When that order was received several thousand volunteers were already in camp and every train that entered the capital was crowded with others who were hurrying

to defend their country's flag. To disband them would have been to chill the patriotism of the State, to expose its borders to spoilation and to confess that the Executive did not comprehend the magnitude of the conflict. He summoned the Legislature in extraordinary session and in the boldest and one of the most dignified messages that ever came from a Northern Executive, he presented the perils to the State and nation and called upon this great Commonwealth to do for the Republic what the Republic was unwilling to do for itself.

The Legislature promptly responded by providing for a loan of $3,000,000 and the organization of fifteen regiments of infantry, with artillery and cavalry, to be known as the Pennsylvania Reserves. They were mustered into the service of the State, but subject to the call of the national government at any time that an additional quota was to be filled. There was a sad sequel in the early vindication of the wisdom of our heroic Governor. Two of the regiments were called to the Maryland border soon after they had been organized, and when the bloody disaster at Bull Run appalled the country, the national authorities which had peremptorily refused to accept these regiments, crowded the wires with the most earnest telegrams begging to have the Pennsylvania Reserves hastened to Washington; and on the next morning after the retreat of McDowell's shattered and demoralized forces into the Arlington intrenchments, was heard the step of the gallant Pennsylvania Reserves marching through the streets of the imperiled capital. When the first regiment arrived at Washington it was met by President Lincoln in person and his greeting was "God bless Pennsylvania; God bless her loyal Governor."

In the reorganization of the army after that defeat, the Pennsylvania troops, by reason of the organized and

drilled Reserve corps, became the nucleus of military discipline and efficiency, and from Drainsville, where it won the first victory of the Army of the Potomac, until the insurgents' flag was furled at Appomattox, the Reserves wrote their records of valor on every battle-field. In this, as in every great emergency during the war, Curtin was heroic.

The Momentous Altoona Conference.

One of the important events of the war in which Governor Curtin played a most conspicuous part is little known in history, and but imperfectly known even by those who observed the great movements which have transpired. I refer to the Altoona conference of the Governors of the North. The reader of history will simply note the fact that the Governors of the loyal States met there, conferred, issued an address, presented it to President Lincoln, and called upon him to make requisition upon their respective States for fresh troops to strengthen our armies for victory; but who is there to-day, save a very few yet surviving, who knew the inner story of that conference? Who can tell why that conference was held?

The Army of the Potomac had been defeated in the seven days' battles in front of Richmond, and Pope had met with disaster on the plains of Manassas and had been driven into the defenses of Washington. Volunteering had ceased; no national conscription law was then in existence, and there was distress bordering on despair in the hearts of the loyal people of the North. Governor Curtin was in New York an invalid in the care of his physician and surgeon, and forbidden to leave his sick room, or to consider official affairs. Secretary Seward was in New York apparently paralyzed by the

darkness that enveloped the country. Governor Curtin, forgetting his illness and the admonitions of his physicians, accepted Seward's invitation to a conference, and Seward repeated to him only what he well knew before, that the depressed condition of the loyal people who supported the government was such that the President believed it to be perilous to issue a call for additional troops, which all knew were absolutely necessary to prosecute the war successfully.

It was at this conference that Curtin suggested a meeting of the loyal Governors at an early day, and that they, speaking for their States, should ask the President to issue a call for 300,000 men, with the assurance that the States would promptly respond to it. The despairing Secretary of State readily grasped so hopeful a proposition, and before they separated dispatches were sent to, and received from, nearly every Governor of the North, all of whom heartily joined in the movement. The conference was fixed at Altoona and was fully attended, and it was that conference and its heroic and patriotic utterance, penned by Andrew G. Curtin and John A. Andrew of Massachusetts, that inspired the nation afresh, that promptly filled up the shattered ranks of the armies, and thus saved the Republic.

In a conversation with the ex-Vice President of the Southern Confederacy some years after the war he told me that the severest blow the South received in the early part of the conflict was the Altoona conference of the Northern Governors that rallied the patriotic people to the support of their armies when the South believed they had won the decisive battles of the war. The author of that conference, the hero of that achievement, was Andrew G. Curtin.

Heroic in War and in Peace.

Nor was he merely heroic in war; he was equally heroic in peace. I saw him when the thunders of the shotted guns of rebellion across in the Cumberland valley reverberated around this capital, and when the archives of the State were gathered and loaded for flight, and I saw him day and night when the legions of Lee made the fate of battle tremble in the balance during the three bloody days at Gettysburg, but he ever rose in his appreciation of duty as perils rose before him.

He was ever at the post of duty, ever faithful, ever wise and ever heroic, and when the news of Lee's surrender was flashed to the capital, and the armies of the rebellion furled their flags and sheathed their swords, from that day until the day of his death he sought to bind the bruised hearts of war and to restore the North and South to union and fellowship. All brave men are heroic in war; all brave men are not heroic in peace, and I regard his efforts for reconcilliation after the work of the reapers in the harvest of death had ended, as one of the brightest of all the bright stars in his crown.

Governor Curtin was not only heroic in war and heroic in peace, but he stands out single over all the rulers of the States or of the nation in his heroic humanity. He was the first of the loyal Governors to organize commissions to minister to the sick, to care for the wounded and to bring every son of Pennsylvania who had fallen in the conflict, home to his sorrowing friends for sepulchre. There was not a Pennsylvania command, even in the most distant part of the South, that did not feel the kind ministrations of the Governor of his State, and never did a letter come to him from a soldier in the ranks, however humble or however unreasonable its purport, that was not answered from the Executive office.

He was called the Soldier's Friend, and the title was no invention of the demagogue. It was fashioned in the spontaneous gratitude of our gallant warriors, who knew that when they entered battle the wounded would be cared for and the dead would be brought back to be entombed with their loved ones who had gone before. I have from time to time carefully examined the records of the different Northern States in their care of the soldiers during the war, and there is not one that approaches the record written by Governor Curtin, nor is there one that did not follow him instead of leading in the beneficent work. He was foremost and master of that achievement, and there is not a Pennsylvania soldier now living in any part of the Union who does not lisp with reverence the name of Andrew G. Curtin as the Soldier's Friend.

The Soldiers' Orphans' Schools.

Governor Curtin's nature was heroically sympathetic. He was the author of the Soldiers' Orphans' Schools of Pennsylvania, the grandest benefaction in the history of any State or nation. It was on a bleak Thanksgiving Day that he was met upon the streets of Harrisburg by two ill-clad children begging for bread, and to their appeal was added, "Father was killed in the war." It was the eloquence of those hapless, helpless children that reared the great structure of philanthropy known as the Soldiers' Orphans' Schools of our State.

He had a desperate battle to secure the necessary legislation. With all his efforts the first bill was defeated, but he did not despair of success. At a later period he gathered a number of the orphans of soldiers, brought them to Harrisburg, entertained all who could find a place in the Executive Mansion and brought them into

this hall to have their bright young faces, clouded by the sorrow of bereavement, plead their own cause. The result was the prompt passage of the bill, and almost before the ink of the certification of the Speakers was dry, it had the approval of the Governor.

Who can measure such a benefaction? We know where it began, and what is has accomplished during the thirty years that it has been fulfilling its purpose, but who can calculate its beneficence as generation after generation shall come to tell the story of their fathers who were made the wards of the Commonwealth when their homes were desolated by the sacrifices of war? Not only those who have been thus educated and cared for by the bounty of the State, but their children testify to the magnitude and grandeur of this unexampled philanthropy, as will their children's children for ages. It was wholly the creation of Andrew G. Curtin, and it will stand in history as one of the most heroic of his public acts.

Popular Appreciation of Curtin.

Governor Curtin's heroism in every line of public duty, and in every illustration of the noblest characteristics of a ruler, called out the most heroic affections of the people of his State. We thoughtlessly speak of men as unappreciated because others have won and worn what are called higher political honors, but mere political position is not the true standard of individual worth or popular appreciation. It is the countless ways in which the love of the people expresses itself and makes it enduring, that tell the story of popular affection for public men. If you will turn to the records of your own Legislature you will find tributes paid to Curtin that are entirely exceptional in the history of our State. On the

12th of April, 1866, when the last Legislature that served under his six years of executive duty was about to close, it made a record that is more expressive and quite as enduring as the monuments which will mark his tomb and grace our Capitol Hill.

A preamble and resolutions declaring that the Legislature could not "contemplate his course during the recent struggle of our country without admiration of the patriotism which made him one of the earliest, foremost and most constant of the supporters of the government, and without commendation of the spirit which prompted him, with an untiring energy and with the sacrifice of personal repose and health, to give to the soldier in the field and in the hospital and to the cause for which the soldier fell and died the fullest sympathy and aid," and thanking him because "he has tempered dignity with kindness and won the high respect and confidence of the people," were proposed in the popular branch by Mr. Ruddiman, the Republican leader of the body, and passed by a vote of ninety-seven recorded ayes, being the entire membership but three, who were unavoidably absent. On the same day Senator Wallace, the Democratic leader of that body, moved the adoption of the resolutions, and the name of every Senator was recorded in favor of their passage.

Again on the 6th of April, 1869, when he had been appointed to Minister of Russia, a Legislature with which he had never had official relation, adopted a resolution thanking the President of the United States for the compliment paid to Curtin and to Pennsylvania, and expressing the earnest wishes of the Legislators for his restoration to health, and it was passed by an absolutely unanimous vote in both Senate and House. No Governor of Pennsylvania, or other public servant either before or

since, ever received such tributes from those who admittedly represented the whole people of the State in their appreciation of our great War Governor.

Wherever he went through the Commonwealth, he he was ever greeted with a heartiness and enthusiasm that untold numbers have sought to win, but only he attained. He was alike the hero of his people whether in power or without sceptre, and every form of affectionate expression that could be given to a public man came like the perpetual bloom and fragrance of flowers upon his pathway.

Love's Tribute at Curtin's Tomb.

I have witnessed great pomp and ceremony when men of distinction have filled their measured days and passed to the City of the Silent, but never was such an expressive pageant in our State as that presented when Andrew G. Curtin was borne to the grave. There were soldiers and associations in ranks to swell the marching column in its solemn tread, but they were forgotten in the oppressive grief that told its sad story on every face, young and old, high and low. The very mountains which surround his desolated home seemed clad in the habilaments of woe, and the sturdy sons of toil who gather golden harvests in the valleys or wrest wealth from the hillsides were there to mingle with every condition and class in the common bereavement that fell upon the community. Children who stood upon the wayside and silently and sadly noted the grief that none escape, will remember to the latest periods of their lives the outpouring of the love of the people of their noblest hero; and with them were those who brought the richest jewels of human lamentation as the children of sorow and want shed their tears upon his tomb.

He had disappointment; who has escaped them? They are the common inheritance of great and small from birth to death, and they are often exquisite in the chastening of heroic qualities and in strengthening men for their best achievements. There are many who are not great in prosperity, but there are a few who are great in adversity. It is only the greatest and most heroic who meet the shock of disappointments with philosophy and start afresh in the battles of life, and Curtin was as heroic in disappointments as he was in triumph. Neither success nor failure could diminish the lustre of his and chivalrous to those who met him in the great struggles of his career.

Did he err? Yes; let the unerring accuse him. If only the sinless cast stones in political and personal conflict its pathway would not be so thickly strewn with mangled reputations. He was thoroughly human or he would not have been great. It is the inexorable decree of infinite wisdom that the judgment of man shall be fallible and that he must stumble in error, and it is best that he should be so or it would not be thus ordained. Man is human and fallible to teach all that only God is God. But who of our public men, tempted and tried as was Curtin, left less of public error to be forgotten? There is not a citizen of Pennsylvania, whose annals have been so heroic by the record of Andrew G. Curtin, that would not join me to-night in saying of him that "the grave buries every error, covers every defect, extinguishes every resentment, and from its peaceful bosom spring none but fond regrets and tender recollections."

A Blessed Life.

The Thracians brought tears to the birth couch and flowers to the tomb. They held that life was most